

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SMS-01 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 ACDA-12 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6614
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO EUROCOMMUNISM?

SUMMARY. ONCE HERALDED AS THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE, DESTINED TO PUSH COMMUNISTS INTO POWER IN PARIS AND ROME, EUROCOMMUNISM IS TAKING ITS LUMPS, ESPECIALLY IN FRANCE.

TRAILING RELUCTANTLY AT FIRST IN THE WAKE OF THE PCI, FRENCH COMMUNISTS FOR A TIME SEEMED CAUGHT UP IN THE THRILL OF THE CHASE, FINALLY AT THE DOORS OF POLITICAL POWER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE ELECTORALLY APPEALING MOVES OF LOPPING OFF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT FROM PARTY STATUTES AND CRITICIZING SELECTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE USSR. BUT ALL THAT EXCITEMENT HAS VANISHED. THE PERSONAL DEBATE WHICH TOOK PLACE EARLIER THIS MONTH BETWEEN COMMUNIST HISTORIAN AND DISSIDENT JEAN ELLEINSTEIN AND PCF LEADER GEORGES MARCHAIS SHOWS JUST HOW FAR THE PCF LEADERSHIP HAS TO GO IN CHANGING ITS CONSERVATIVE AND INTROVERTED WAYS.

1. EUROCOMMUNISM ON THE DEFENSIVE: "EUROCOMMUNISM REMAINS AN IDEA ON THE MARCH", SAYS COMMUNIST HISTORIAN JEAN ELLEINSTEIN, DEPITE SOME "REAL HESITATIONS" BY THE FRENCH PARTY. HESITATIONS? SURELY AN OPTIMISTIC CHOICE OF WORDS BY THE PCF'S ONLY OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATE OF EUROCOMMUNISM, PUT FORWARD IN THE FACE OF CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT HIS PARTY LEADERSHIP IN FACT WANTS LITTLE OR NO PART OF THE IDEA. WHILE ELLEINSTEIN ARGUES THE NECESSITY FOR A LIBERALIZATION OF BOTH DOCTRINE AND STRATEGY (FOR WHICH HE MAY FIND SOME SUPPORT, ALBEIT SILENT, AMONG PARTY INTELLECTUALS), THE PCF INSTEAD RETREATS MORE DEEPLY INTO THE DOGMA OF YESTERYEAR, SO THAT COMMUNIST POLITICAL THEORY OF 1978 BEGINS

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TO RESEMBLE ONCE AGAIN THAT OF THE 1950'S AND 1960'S (WITHOUT THE STALINIST CONTENT), LEAVING ONLY THE RHETORIC OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT, THE COMMON PROGRAM, ETC., FROM MORE RECENT TIMES.

2. ACCORDING TO ELLEINSTEIN, WRITING IN AUGUST IN PARIS MATCH AND LE MONDE, THE FUTURE OF THE PCF DEPENDS ON ITS ABILITY TO STRIKE A "HISTORIC ALLIANCE"

WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND TO DEFINE A "THIRD SOLUTION" WHICH IS NEITHER THE STATE SOCIALISM OF THE EAST NOR THE SOCIAL DEMOCRACY OR CAPITALISM OF THE WEST. THE PS/PCF ALLIANCE SHOULD SPECIFY THE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES OF SOCIALISM IN THE FRENCH CONTEXT AS WELL AS THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS FOR ITS CONSTRUCTION. AS FOR THE "THIRD SOLUTION", ITS CREDIBILITY DEPENDS FIRST AND FOREMOST ON PCF WILLINGNESS TO CATEGORICALLY REJECT THE SOVIET EXPERIENCE, TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE MOSCOW DISSIDENT TRIALS AND THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA "ARE NOTHING OTHER THAN THE PRODUCT OF A SYSTEM BASED ON THE DOMINATION OF THE BUREAUCRACY AND WHERE WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE NON EXISTENT."

3. THE PROPHET DISAVOWED: ELLEINSTEIN OF COURSE IS
PUSHING PURE EUROCOMMUNISM, INCLUDING ITS IDEAS FOR DE-
MOCRATIZING INTERNAL PARTY ORGANIZATION AND "PERFECTING"
DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM. FOR THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, HE RE-
MAINS A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS, COMPLETELY IGNO-
RED BY THE PCF PRESS IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY INDICATION
THAT HE COMMANDS A SERIOUS FOLLOWING. (THERE IS IN
FACT NO WAY FO MEASURING ELLEINSTEIN'S IMPACT, WHICH IS
CERTAINLY GREATER ON TACTICAL ISSUES SUCH AS OPEN TRI-
BUNES THAN ON BROADER IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS OF A

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"HISTORIC ALLIANCE"). SECRETARY GENERAL GEORGES MARCHAIS HAS PUBLICLY REFUTED ELLEINSTEIN, ACCUSING HIM OF "LIES, FALSIFICATIONS AND IGNORANCE." THIS KIND OF TREATMENT FOR A MAN ONCE CONSIDERED THE STALKING HORSE FOR MARCHAIS' OWN "LIBERAL" INITIATIVES.

4. MOREOVER, COMMUNIST DOCTRINE, AS IT HAS EVOLVED SINCE THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE UNITED LEFT, SEEMS TO CLOSE OUT CONSIDERATION OF ELLEINSTEIN'S IDEAS. MARCHAIS AGREES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THERE IS NO MODEL FOR "SOCIALISM IN FRENCH COLORS", BUT HE CLEARLY HESITATES AT MAKING A DEFINITIVE BREAK WITH THE USSR.

-- HUMANITE STILL AVOIDS CRITICISM OF THE SOVIET UNION, OTHER THAN THE OCCASIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INCIDENT;

-- EVEN IN MARKING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE PCF LINKED ITS CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET TROOPS TO THE DISSOLUTION OF MILITARY BLOCS.

AS FOR THE "HISTORIC ALLIANCE", PCF/PS RELATIONS HAVE SELDOM BEEN WORSE; AS DID A PCF CONTACT RECENTLY, ONE COULD AS WELL SPECULATE ON A HISTORICAL CONVERGENCE OSC COMMUNISM AND GAULLISM. INTERNAL PARTY LIBERALIZATION ALSO APPEARS A LONG WAY OFF; THE "PRIMER" FOR THE 23RD CONGRESS, PAUL LAURENT'S SOON TO BE PUBLISHED "THE PCF AS IT IS", PROMISES ONLY OCCASIONAL OPEN TRIBUNES IN THE PCF PRESS AND A MERELY COSMETIC TOUCH-UP AIMED AT "DEMOCRATIZING" DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM.

5. 20 PERCENT SOLUTION: THE NET RESULT IS THAT WHILE ELLEINSTEIN SEEKS HIS SO-CALLED "MODERN PCF" -- INNO-

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VATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE -- COMMUNIST STRATEGY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DEFENSIVE AND CONSERVATIVE. ESSEN-

TIALLY A HOLDING ACTION DESIGNED TO PROTECT ITS CURRENT
20 PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE, PCF POLICY IN 1978 IS
A RETURN TO THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS WHICH HAVE INSURED
SURVIVAL FOR NEARLY SIXTY YEARS:

- EMPHASIS ON THE TRIBUNE ROLE AS "SOLE DEFENDER OF THE WORKING CLASS;"
- STRUGGLE FOR COMMUNIST HEGEMONY ON THE LEFT;
PS PREDOMINANCE CANNOT BE TOLERATED, CLASS
COLLABORATION IS DEADLY;
- TOTAL COMMITMENT TO OPPOSITIONAL PURITY, I.E.,
THE PCF WILL GOVERN ON ITS OWN TERMS OR NOT AT
ALL, AND WILL CERTAINLY REFUSE TO "MANAGE THE
CRISIS OF CAPITALISM".

6. THE EUROPEAN QUESTION: THIS STRATEGY IS COMBINED
IN FRANCE WITH A FANATICAL BRAND OF NATIONALISM AND AN
ACCOMPLISHED STYLE OF DEMAGOGUERY TO PRODUCE A NOT
VERY SUBTLE BUT NONETHELESS EFFECTIVE ELECTORAL APPEAL.
ULTRA-NATIONALISM, OF COURSE, DRIVES ANOTHER IMPORTANT
WEDGE BETWEEN FRENCH COMMUNISTS AND THEIR WOULD-BE
EUROCOMMUNIST NEIGHBOTS, LEAVING THE PCF AS ODD-MAN
ON NEARLY EVERY EUROPEAN QUESTION. ONCE AGAIN SWIMMING
AGAINST THE CURRENT, ELLEINSTEIN ARGUES THAT THE PCF
MUST RECOGNIZE EUROPE AS THE POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD FOR
THE REMAINDER OF THIS CENTURY AND ONE WHICH DICTATES
THE COOPERATION OF ALL EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. IN
FACT, PCF NATIONALISM IS SO RAMPANT AS TO SUPERCEDE
EVEN THE HERETOFORE SACROSANCT CONSIDERATIONS OF COM-
MUNIST INTERNATIONALISM. THUS, IN THE CASE OF SPANISH
ENTRY INTO THE EC, PROTECTION OF FRENCH FARMERS TAKES
PRECEDENCE OVER SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS OF
SPAIN, AND THE CAUSE OF EUROCOMMUNISM SUFFERS ONCE
AGAIN.

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7. IS THIS SIMPLY A TRANSIENT PHASE, A "HESITATION",
NECESSITATED BY TACTICAL POLITICAL REASONS, I.E., TO
HOLD THE LINE AT 20 PERCENT IN THE JUNE 1979 ELECTIONS
FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT? IS THE PCF BIDDING ITS TIME,
WAITING FOR A MORE PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO MAKE THE CHANGES
WHICH ELLEINSTEIN SAYS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE PARTY'S
SURVIVAL? ONLY TIME WILL TELL, BUT GIVEN THE TRACK RE-
CORD OF THE PCF AND ITS PROFOUNDLY CONSERVATIVE NATURE,
OUR BET IS THAT JEAN ELLEINSTEIN'S PROMISED LAND OF
EUROCOMMUNISM WILL BE A LONG TIME IN COMING.
HARTMAN

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